

Appendix C: Background on Environmental Justice

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Definition of Environmental Justice (U.S. EPA): The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. *Fair treatment* means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations, or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.

United States Policy on Environmental Justice: On February 11, 1994, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12898 ordering every Federal agency to “make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States and its territories and possessions, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of Mariana Islands.”

Lake Erie Binational Public Forum Policy Statement on Environmental Justice: In October of 1997, a majority of the Lake Erie Binational Public Forum voted to adopt the U.S. EPA definition of Environmental Justice, and endorsed the following Environmental Justice policy statement:

The Lake Erie LaMP Binational Public Forum recognizes the inherent value of Lake Erie as a natural environment, and that regardless of race, color, or national origin or economic circumstances:

- any citizen has the right to participate in decisions which affect the environment;
- that no segment of the population of the Lake Erie watershed should suffer disproportionately from adverse human health or environmental effects because of race, color, national origin, or economic circumstances, and should have the opportunity to live in clean, healthy, and sustainable Lake Erie communities;
- that every person of the Lake Erie watershed should have the right to public participation, government accountability, access to the courts, and protection of human health.

The Lake Erie LaMP Binational Public Forum hereby recognizes the following:

1. Executive Order 12898 in the U.S.
2. Environmental Bill of Rights, 1993 (Statutes of Ontario, 1993) in Canada.